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MICHENER 2000

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

A DISCUSSION PAPER

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PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Michener Centre has provided an invaluable service to the mentally handicapped in Alberta for over sixty years. However, times have changed as have the needs of the mentally handicapped. A growing trend toward the normalization of services to the handicapped throughout Alberta has dictated a new role for Michener Centre. Michener 2000, Planning for the Future is the planning document that will provide the core element of a planning strategy that will drive the development of future services for Michener Centre residents.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

Alberta Social Services supports the rights of all mentally handicapped persons to access services that are designed and delivered in accordance with the unique needs and personal choices of individuals.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

(1) Michener Centre will continue to provide services to the mentally handicapped citizens of Alberta.

(2) Services, programs and facilities at Michener Centre will be redesigned to reflect the needs of the clients as well as the philosophical thrust of normalization principles.

(3) Community living alternatives will be encouraged for clients who wish to access these resources.

(4) Clients, parents and guardians will be an integral component of the decision making process for all placement decisions.

(5) Community involvement will be stressed in the ongoing evolution of Michener Centre as a resource for handicapped persons.

(6) Community living alternatives will be financed through the transfer of institutional dollars to the community.

(7) Michener Centre staff will be provided with opportunities for input and consultation as well as career growth and change.

PHYSICAL PLANT

INTRODUCTION

Michener Centre is an aging facility with ever increasing demands for capital maintenance and repair. The centre will need extensive overhaul to provide appropriate services to the mentally handicapped in the future. At the same time more and more residents of Michener Centre wish to live in the community with their non-handicapped peers, a common trend throughout other jurisdictions in North America. Considering the options available, the development of community based resources, along with the upgrading of habilitation standards on the Michener campus, are considered to be the most reasonable alternatives.

GOALS

- To reinvest capital expenditures into community based alternatives.
- To redesign the current site in line with the philosophical thrust of normalization and integration.

PRIMARY STRATEGIES

- A re-appraisal of the building and maintenance program.
- Capital expenditures except for health and safety issues.
- Contracting of a Michener Site Evaluation and Development Plan with a focus on:
  - (A) Reduced and aging populations
  - (B) Integration with the community
  - (C) Normalized environments
- Downsizing and demolition of residences deemed to be "most inappropriate" for clients (primarily on the North Site).

COMMUNITY LIVING ALTERNATIVES

INTRODUCTION

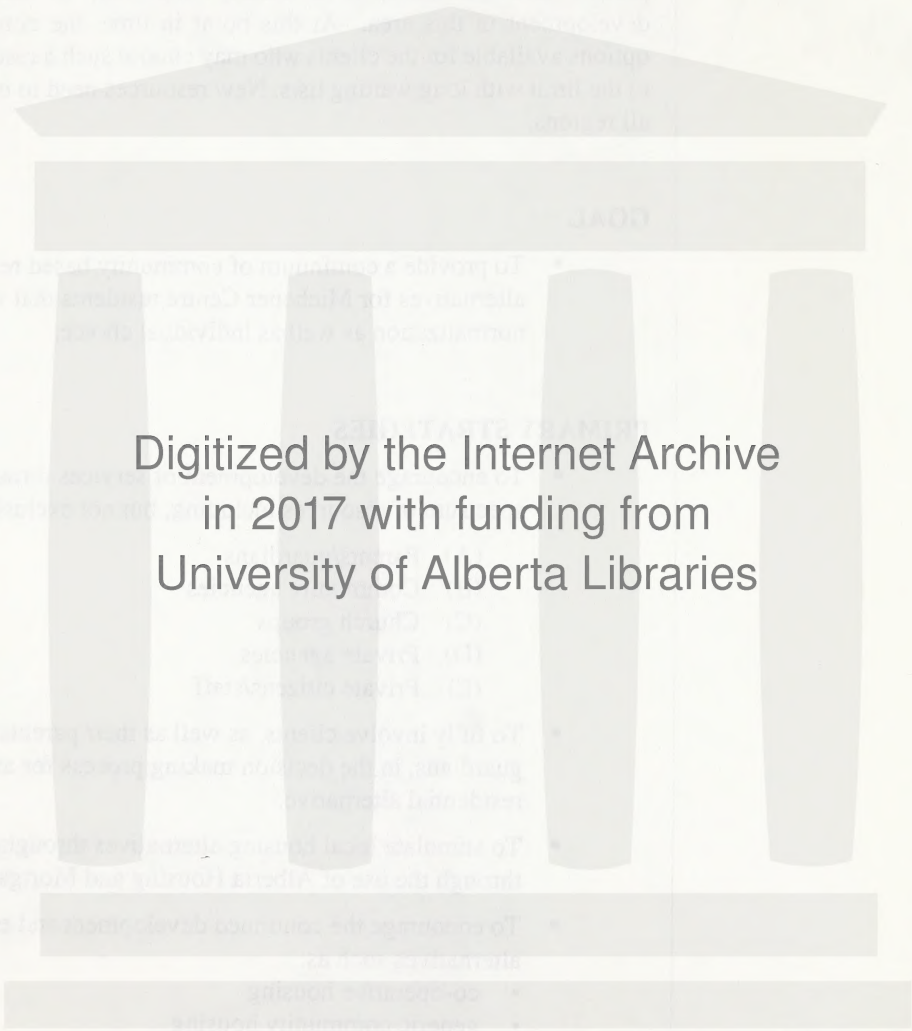
Many Michener Centre residents could appropriately be living in community settings. While this option may not be the choice of all clients, parents and guardians, it is clearly important to stimulate further development in this area. At this point in time, the community based options available for the clients who may choose such a resource are taxed to the limit with long waiting lists. New resources need to be developed in all regions.

GOAL

- To provide a continuum of community based residential alternatives for Michener Centre residents that will encourage normalization as well as individual choice.

PRIMARY STRATEGIES

- To encourage the development of services through a broad spectrum of resources including, but not exclusive to:
  - (A) Parents/guardians
  - (B) Community agencies
  - (C) Church groups
  - (D) Private agencies
  - (E) Private citizens/staff
- To fully involve clients, as well as their parents and/or guardians, in the decision making process for an appropriate residential alternative.
- To stimulate local housing alternatives throughout Alberta through the use of Alberta Housing and Mortgage units.
- To encourage the continued development and expansion of alternatives such as:
  - co-operative housing
  - generic community housing
  - specialized foster care



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PARTNERSHIPS/ COMMUNICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Michener Centre has historically operated independently, and often autonomously, of parents and the community at large. The successful evolution of Michener Centre from its current institutional status to a smaller, more dynamic and flexible resource, will require "a new partnership" between clients, parents, guardians, staff and management, as well as the larger Alberta community. Such a partnership implies participation in a shared responsibility for enhancing the quality of life for all handicapped persons currently residing on the Michener campus. Stimulating community awareness and involvement in the gradual evolution of Michener Centre will also necessitate a broadly based and continuous communication plan.

GOALS

- To involve stakeholder groups (parents/guardians, community agencies, regions) in the consultative process of developing and implementing plans for Michener Centre.
- To provide a viable communication network between Michener Centre, parents/guardians, community agencies and Regions as well as government personnel and other stakeholder groups.

PRIMARY STRATEGIES

- Encouragement of stakeholder groups and interested parties to give ongoing feedback to Michener Centre Executive Committee.
- Monthly updates to parents/guardians and staff.
- Circulation of monthly updates to regions, community agencies and interested parties.
- Quarterly briefings to the Minister, M.L.A.'s and Social Services Extended Executive Committee.
- Open forums to discuss plans, solicit feedback and provide progress reports. Forums will be open to the public and will solicit representation from the following:
  - (A) Parents/guardians
  - (B) Staff
  - (C) Regions
  - (D) Alberta Association for Community Living
  - (E) City of Red Deer
  - (F) Community Service Agencies

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Uncertainty about the future, combined with increased demands on limited resources, have taken their toll on staff morale at Michener Centre over the past few years. Developing alternatives for client care must involve the invaluable input of their current caregivers in the planning and implementation of these services.

While residents plan and choose alternatives, staff as well should be encouraged to take an active role in providing client services both within and outside of Michener's boundaries. Options will range from the current status quo to a variety of entrepreneurial ventures involving a range of client alternatives in the community. Staff development, and involvement, will be critical factors in the successful implementation of all client services.

GOALS

- To increase staff training and professional development.
- To provide staff opportunities and assistance in pursuing community based roles in the provision of services to handicapped persons.

PRIMARY STRATEGIES

- Development of a long term staff training plan.
- Development of a communications and consultation plan for staff and management.
- Development of a master plan of "staff alternatives" to include (but not exclusive to) community service provision, entrepreneurial initiatives, specialized foster care, and contractual explorations.

FINANCIAL STRATEGIES

The improvement of services, living conditions, and overall quality of life for Michener clients is the primary goal of change. Supporting this direction will allow Alberta Social Services to show leadership in providing a continuum of services for mentally handicapped clients while at the same time respecting its primary principles of basic human rights, personal independence, informed choice and quality services.

In the final analysis Michener Centre residents who choose to live in the community will be financed with monies (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped, support services, etc.) that are currently being used to support them in the institution. In essence, the monies will follow the client from the institution to the community.

Practically and logistically speaking, this cannot happen on an individual basis. Capital maintenance costs, staffing, supplies, etc., as well as building closures and other cost saving strategies will only come into effect when significant numbers of clients begin to move. In the interim, monies that are saved immediately are currently intended to be used to improve habilitation opportunities for all clients who choose to stay at Michener Centre. Providing a system of parallel funding is the only viable means of making the necessary changes both in Michener Centre and in the provision of community based alternatives.

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